UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

-- *The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address* --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
  Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *25 August 2003*.

2a) ☐ This action is FINAL.   2b) ☒ This action is non-final.

3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) ☒ Claim(s) *1-10* is/are pending in the application.

  4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) ☒ Claim(s) *1-10* is/are rejected.

7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on *27 August 2003* is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.

  Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

  Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

  a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:

    1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

    2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

    3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

  * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
   Paper No(s)/Mail Date *08/27/2003*.

4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
   Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____

5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1.   This communication is a first Office Action Non-Final rejection on the merits.

Claims 1-10 as originally filed, are currently pending and have been considered below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form

the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public
use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United
States.

2. **Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Wong et**

al. (# 6,115,690).

        As per Claim 1, Wong et al. discloses a system for managing accounts payable,

the system comprising:

        a database server for storing accounts payable data (Such as the single

database disclosed in Column 12, line 22 and shown in Figure 2B) is provided storing a

database including files belonging to different business domains, e.g. a products

domain, a payments domain, a financial performance domain and a personnel domain);

        an application server electrically connected with the database server for

accessing and processing data stored in the database server (Database Management

System (DBMS) is construed to be the application server. See Figure 2B and 3),

        the application server comprising a data obtaining module for obtaining data from

external systems (Modules are discussed in Column 12, lines 55-64 and shown in

Figure 2B, as for example sales, sales support and in Figure 3 as payments and

products. Data is received from external systems as shown in the arrows of Figure 2B,

also see Figure 3 showing internal access),

a procurement data managing module for managing procurement data obtained

from the external systems (Column 19, lines 16-19 discuss an intelligent catalog

management, in an exemplary embodiment, is based on a concept of "baseline." A

baseline is a collection of products that functions as a standard of comparison, where

collection of products is construed as procurement data),

a procurement confirming module for confirming fulfillment of procurements

according to cargo receipt data (Column 13, lines 51-57 discuss a quote number and

the quote date are displayed at the top of the quote. The salesman assigned to the

account is displayed, together with account-specific defaults concerning shipping and

payment terms. Then the items quoted are displayed, including description,

manufacturer part number, unit price, quantity, and extended price. The sub-total,

applicable tax, and total are calculated and displayed. Quote is described as a form of

confirming items for procurement),

a purchase return managing module for managing purchase returns (Column 29,

lines 28-29, discuss returns are provided for through a Return Merchandise

Authorization (RMA) mechanism),

a payment data managing module for managing payment data (See Figure 86A

and 86B),

a payment date and sum calculating module for calculating optimal payment

sums and dates according to payment term data obtained by the data obtaining module

(See Figure 93A-93C, that displays a date, payment sum as Total Invoice, payment
terms as Amount for each Invoice and where optimal payment is construed as a
payment schedule with billed amount and due date),

an account payable managing module for managing and updating the account
payable data stored in the database server (Column 37, lines 12-17 discuss invoices
and other records are viewed and modified, they are flagged to be checked by a
centralized GL module to determine if the modification requires an adjusting entry. If so,
the adjusting entry is made automatically alongside the original entry, invoices and
accounts payable data are known within the art of accounts management to be included
within other records to be entered into a general ledger),

and an account booking module for automatically generating accounting entries
(Column 36, lines 62-64, discuss having instead of manual posting of accounting
entries, posting is automatic, either continuous or at user-specified intervals such as
done nightly);

and a plurality of client computers electrically connected to the application server
for downloading data from and uploading data to the database server (See Figure 3),

As per Claim 2, Wong et al. discloses, a system wherein the application server
further comprises a data searching module for users to search the accounts payable
data and accounting entries data (Column 34, lines 23-28 discuss using a related switch
feature, where a user may select one or more records within the output display and
select a related file from a pop-up of related files. The system then searches in the
related file for records related to the selected records and displays the related records in

the output display format of the related file. Column 34, lines 30-31 further disclose the

related switch capability may be used to switch to related customer invoices, vendor

invoices, credit memos, etc).

     As per Claim 3, Wong et al. discloses, a system wherein the application server

electrically connects with a procurement management system for accessing

procurement data stored in the procurement management system and updating the

accounts payable data in the database server accordingly (Column 37, lines 12-17

discuss invoices and other records are viewed and modified, they are flagged to be

checked by a centralized GL module to determine if the modification requires an

adjusting entry. If so, the adjusting entry is made automatically alongside the original

entry. It is known within the art of accounts management that accounts payable data is

included within other records to be entered into a general ledger, therefore any

updates for accounts payable will occur within the general ledger of this system).

     As per Claim 4, Wong et al. discloses a system wherein the application server

electrically connects with an inventory management system for accessing cargo receipt

data stored in the inventory management system, (See Figure 28A-28B, which show

shipping information for products shipped from an inventory).

     As per Claim 5, Wong et al. discloses a system wherein the application server

electrically connects with a bank note management system for accessing payment data

stored in the bank note management system (Column 37, lines 21- 25 discuss an AR

portion of the GL functionality would make general ledger entries immediately to reflect

payment information as it is input, a purchasing portion would make general ledger

entries immediately to reflect obligations as incurred through purchase orders. By definition bank note is any form of payment, therefore payment information inputted within the system are identical to the process of accessing payment data).

2.   **Claims 6-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wong (#6,115,690) in view of Lee et al. (US PG PUB. 2003/00409990).**

As per **Claim 6**, Wong discloses a method for managing accounts payable, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) obtaining cargo receipt data of a procurement (See Figure 29A-29B, which show shipping data and item shipped);

(b) calculating at least an account payable for the procurement according to procurement data stored in a database server (Column 35, 9-11 discuss shipping records are then searched, and freight charges for shipments with the specified carrier during the specified period are totaled);

(g) determining whether a purchase return related to the procurement has occurred (Column 29, lines 28-30 discuss returns are provided for through a Return Merchandise Authorization (RMA) mechanism);

(h) deducting a sum of a refund of the purchase return from the account payable if a purchase return related to the procurement has occurred (Column 29, lines 60-63 discuss if a return is for credit, for example, then return type 1 is the corresponding return type. Depending on whether payment was by check, credit card or credit memo, different fields may be applicable); and

(i) updating the account payable of the procurement (Column 37, lines 12-17 discuss invoices and other records are viewed and modified, they are flagged to be checked by a centralized GL module to determine if the modification requires an adjusting entry. If so, the adjusting entry is made automatically alongside the original entry), **but** fails to disclose (c) determining whether the procurement has an advance payment, (d) deducting a sum of the advance payment from the account payable if the procurement has an advance payment, (e) determining whether the procurement has a purchase discount, and (f) deducting a sum of the purchase discount from the account payable if the procurement has a purchase discount.

Both Lee et al. and Wong et al. are within the same field of managing accounts payable. Lee et al. teaches a method to automatically calculate cash discount for early payment (Paragraph [0017]) and a method where the computer system generates a payment batch number corresponding to all payable documents; then input current intended settlement amount corresponding to any of the payable documents, and current deductible amount as found in Paragraph [0035]. Lee further discloses the system provides cash discount amount to enable users to decide whether to make early payment (Paragraph [0039]) and then users enter current settlement amount or through the system to automatically calculate cash discount (Paragraph [0047]).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time invention was made to modify the integrated business-to-business web commerce and automation system of Wong et al. to include a method of automatically calculating cash discounts for early payment and a method of making alterations for discounts due to

early payments. The motivation to combine the business-to-business web commerce and automation system of Wong et al. and the accounts payable system of Lee et al. would be to give customers an incentive to make advance payments in order to receive discounts.

As per Claim 7, Wong et al discloses a method wherein the step (a) further comprises the step of generating a certificate of the account payable (Column 36, lines 10-11 discuss accounting information is presented in the form of financial statements. The usage of the term certificate indicates a document showing credits and debits, therefore "financial statements" are interchangeable).

As per Claim 8, Wong et al. discloses a method wherein the procurement data are obtained from a procurement management system (Column 19, lines 16-19 discuss an intelligent catalog management, in an exemplary embodiment, is based on a concept of "baseline." A baseline is a collection of products that functions as a standard of comparison).

As per Claim 9, Wong et al. discloses a method, further comprising the steps of: (j) retrieving payment terms data of the procurement according to the procurement data (Column 24, lines 28-29 discuss assembled information is input to A/P and A/R modules. Customer payments are received and entered in conjunction with the A/P module);

(k) calculating an optimal payment sum and date according to the payment terms data (See Figure 93A-93C, that displays a date, payment sum as Total Invoice,

payment terms as Amount for each Invoice and where optimal payment is construed as a payment schedule with billed amount and due date);

(l) sending the optimal payment sum and date to a financial department (Column 24, lines 31-36 discuss a general ledger (GL) module tracks transactions and their financial implications in real time. It therefore receives information from the A/P, A/R and virtual inventory modules as well and entry points E6 and E7. Bank statement information is also input to the general ledger module at entry point E8);

(m) receiving a payment message about the procurement (See Figure 104A and 104333B); and

(n) balancing the account payable of the procurement, and generating relevant accounting entries (See Figure 106A and 106B).

As per Claim 10, Wong et al discloses a system for managing accounts payable comprising:

a database server for storing accounts payable data (Column 12, lines 55-59 discuss a Web-enabled, client/server relational database management system is provided storing a database including files belonging to different business domains, e.g. a products domain, a payments domain, a financial performance domain and a personnel domain);

means for retrieving cargo receipt data of a procurement (Column 33, lines 16-17 discuss when an order is shipped, a customer invoice is automatically issued, i.e., entered into the computer system);

means for calculating at least an account payable for the procurement according to the data of the procurement (Column 13, lines 51-57 discuss items quoted are displayed, including description, manufacturer part number, unit price, quantity, and extended price. The sub-total, applicable tax, and total are calculated and displayed. Where items are procurements and total amount are construed as forms of accounts payable);

means for determining whether a related purchase return has occurs and deducting a sum of said purchase return from the account payable if applicable (Column 29, lines 28-29, discuss returns are provided for through a Return Merchandise Authorization (RMA) mechanism and Column 29, lines 60-63 further discuss if a return is for credit, which is inherently determined as a reduction from a customers purchase); and

means for updating the account payable of the procurement (Column 37, lines 12-17 discuss invoices and other records are viewed and modified, they are flagged to be checked by a centralized GL module to determine if the modification requires an adjusting entry. If so, the adjusting entry is made automatically alongside the original entry, where the usage of the term modified and modification is synonymous with updating), **but** fails to disclose a means for determining whether a related advance payment has been made and deducting a sum of said advance payment from the account payable if applicable; and means for determining whether a related purchase discount exists and deducting a sum of said purchase discount from the account payable if applicable.

Both Lee et al. and Wong et al. are within the same field of managing accounts payable. Lee et al. teaches a method to automatically calculate cash discount for early payment (Paragraph [0017]) and where the payable amount for the payment batch number is the sum of current payable expenditures of all payable documents, and the current payable expenditure of any payable document is the difference of the current intended settlement amount and current deductible amount for the payable document as found in Paragraph [0020]. Lee further discloses the system provides cash discount amount to enable users to decide whether to make early payment (Paragraph [0039]) and then users enter current settlement amount or through the system to automatically calculate cash discount (Paragraph [0047]), where the usage of early can be interchanged with advance.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time invention was made to modify the integrated business-to-business web commerce and automation system of Wong et al. to include a method of automatically calculating cash discounts for early payment and a method of making alterations for discounts due to early payments. The motivation to combine the business-to-business web commerce and automation system of Wong et al. and the accounts payable system of Lee et al. would be to give customers an incentive to make advance payments in order to receive discounts.

Conclusion

3.   The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Sharpe et al. (#5,222,018) discloses a system for centralized processing of accounting and payment functions.

Brown et al. (#6,910,021) discloses a financial management system including an offset payment process.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ashford S. Hayles whose telephone number is 571-270-5106. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Thursday 8:30 to 4:00 Eastern Time.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lynda Jasmin can be reached on 571-270-3033. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Elaine Gort/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3627

AH